

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY MANAMA

UNCLAS MUSCAT 1079

AID FOR SER/CFS; MANAMA FOR DODSON

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EFIS BTIO MU
SUBJECT: OMANIS SEEK AMERICAN DEEP-SEA FISHING FIRM

1. IN ORDER TO DEVELOP OFFSHORE FISHING RESOURCES IN A MANNER THAT WILL NOT THREATEN TRADITIONAL OMANI FISHERMEN, THE OMANGOV HAS DECIDED TO MAKE NEW OPERATING AGREEMENTS WITH FOREIGN FISHING FIRMS IN ADDITION TO AN ALREADY EXISTING CONTRACT WITH A JAPANESE COMPANY, TAIYO. OMAN DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FISHERIES AHMED SHANFARI HAS TOLD US THAT OMAN WOULD PARTICULARLY LIKE TO MAKE AN AGREEMENT WITH AN AMERICAN FIRM.

2. THE DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES IS SEEKING A 3-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH A FOREIGN FIRM TO FISH THE AREA SOUTH OF MASIRAH. THE PRECISE AREA OF OPERATION WOULD BE DECIDED BY NEGOTIATION, BUT THE TRAWLERS COULD COME NO CLOSER TO SHORE THAN 50 SEA MILES, AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO FISH IN WATER DEPTHS GREATER THAN 20 MEETERS. THE OMANIS DO NOT WANT A JOINT VENTURE, BUT INSTEAD SEEK A PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD GIVE THE OMANGOV AT LEAST 40 PERCENT OF THE NET CATCH. THE FOREIGN PARTNER WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MARKET THE OMANGOV SHARE OF THE CATCH UPON REQUEST. IN
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ADDITION TO A YEAR'S PAYMENT IN ADVANCE FOR THE FISHING LICENSE, THE FOREIGN PARTNER WOULD BE ASKED TO PAY A SIGNATURE BONUS EQUIVALENT TO \$50 A TON FOR EACH TRAWLER EMPLOYED.

3. THE OMANIS STIPULATE THAT AT LEAST 4 TRAWLERS OF ABOUT 2,000 GROSS TONNAGE EACH SHOULD BE USED. TWO REPRESENTATIVE

SENTATIVES FROM MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND TEN OMANI
TRANIEES ARE TO BE PLACED ABOARD EACH VESSEL. ONLY
BOTTOM FISH WILL BE CAUGHT. SHANFARI HOPES THAT AN AGREE-
MENT WITH A FOREIGN FISHING COMPANY CAN BE CONCLUDED BY
AUTUMN AND THAT FISHING OPERATIONS WOULD START TWO MONTHS
AFTER THE SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT.

4. COMMENTS: SHANFARI'S REQUEST INDICATES THE OMANGOV'S
INTEREST IN SPEEDING DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL FISHING IN
OMANI WATERS. A KUWAITI/NORWEGIAN JOINT VENTURE TO
BUILD AND RUN A SARDINE CANNING PLAND IN SALALAH HAS
RECENTLY RECEIVED OMANGOV APPROVAL; THE PROJECT WILL
BE FINANCED ENTIRELY BY THE KUWAITIS, AND 80 PERCENT OF
THE NET PROFIT WILL ACCRUE TO THE OMANGOV. U.S. FIRMS
INTERESTED IN OMANI TRAWLING OPERATIONS SHOULD REALIZE
THAT AHMED SHANFARI IS A HARD BARGAINER FOR THE OMANGOV
WHO HAS KEPT TAIYO ON A TIGHT REIN BOTH IN TERMS OF
PROFITS AND FREEDOM TO OPERATE.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: USDOC PLEASE CONTACT AMERICAN FISHING
FIRMS. INTERESTED COMPANIES SHOULD DIRECTLY CONTACT MR.
AHMED SALIM SAID SHANFARI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF FISHERIES,
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, PETROLEUM AND NATURAL
RESOURCES, P.O. BOX 551, MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN,
TELEX 3280 PLANDEV MB, CABLE PLANDEV.

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